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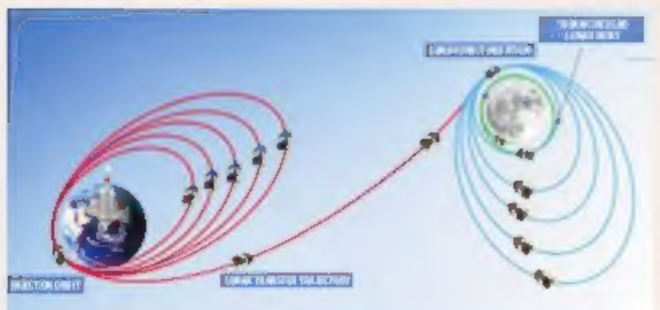
'FAT BOY' LAUNCHES INDIA'S THIRD MOONSHOT TODAY



Soft-landing on lunar surface on Aug 23, 24

BALA CHAUHAN & DONNA EVA
@Chennai/Bengaluru

THE countdown for Chandrayaan 3 has begun with the ISRO review committee giving its clearance for the lift-off from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC SHAR) at Sriharikota on Friday at 2.35 pm.

The Launch Vehicle Mark-III-M4 (LVM3-M4) rocket, dubbed as 'Fat Boy' by space scientists for its ability to carry heavy payloads, is the operational heavy lift launch vehicle that will carry an integrated package of three modules: the propulsion module, the lander module, and the rover module. The mission will aim to soft-land the lander module carrying the rover near the lunar south pole after separating from the propulsion module. On landing, it will deploy the rover to conduct on-site scientific experiments on the lunar surface for 14 days (1 lunar day). The soft-landing is expected to happen on August 23 or 24.

The LVM3-M4 of ISRO has a "pedigree of completing six consecutive successful missions." This is the fourth operational flight of LVM3, and will be launched from the second launch pad (SLP), SDSC, SHAR, ISRO said.

About 16 minutes after launch on Friday, the propulsion module will separate from 'Fat Boy', and the earth-centric mission phase will begin. In this phase, over the next few days, the propulsion module (with the lander carrying the rover attached to it) will make five increasingly larger elliptical orbits around the earth, with the final orbit's farthest point being 36,500 km and closest point to earth being 170 km. The idea is to use the earth's gravity like a sling swung multiple times to gain momentum for its 3,84,400-km journey to the moon and get captured by the lunar gravity.

CONTINUED ON: P10

DELHI SWAMPED

Overflowing Yamuna forces closure of schools, colleges and govt offices; traffic hit; Capital faces 25% drinking water shortage

AMIT PANDEY & ANUP VERMA
@ New Delhi

THE National Capital on Thursday witnessed its severest flooding in the past five decades as the Yamuna level went way past the danger level, reaching 208.66 metres at 7 pm. The unprecedented swelling of the river resulted in heavy flooding on major roads within the city, causing widespread disruption and posing a significant threat to residents.

Among the immediate concerns is the availability of drinking water, as the city's three main water treatment plants have been shut due to the flooding. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said 25% of Delhi's water supply could be hit the for the next couple of days.

Over 20,000 people living in low-lying areas have been shifted to relief camps and as many as 50 boats have been deployed for rescue and relief. Since setting up washrooms has become a challenge in some relief camps, the government has decided to shift some of the relief camps to schools.

Besides, the government announced the closure of all private and government schools in the flood-affected areas.

Around 40 trauma patients, including three on ventilators, had to be shifted out of the Civil Lines-based Sushruta Trauma Centre as its premises got inundated. The continuous rise in water levels did not spare the Delhi Secretariat, which houses the offices of the chief minister, his cabinet, and other top bureaucrats. Their premises are flooded. The iconic Red Fort, too, was swamped.

Delhi water minister Saurabh Bhardwaj said five of the 32 iron gates under the ITO bridge are jammed due to the accumulated silt, preventing evacuation of incoming water from Wazirabad. Floodwater is otherwise flowing freely on the other side of the bridge. Efforts are on to clear the silt using a compressor, Bhardwaj said. The gates are operated by the Haryana government.

> The water level has stabilised ... It is expected to drop to 208.45 m by 3 am on Friday. The flow rate at Hathnikund barrage in Haryana is also down to 80,000 cusecs
>
> - Sharad Chandra, Central Water Commission Director

The Delhi Traffic Police announced traffic restrictions along key routes, including ITO, Kashmiri Gate, and Red Fort, diverting traffic to alternative pathways.

The floodwaters also impacted the mass transport system, as the Kashmiri Gate Bus Terminal was flooded. The government banned the entry of heavy vehicles at certain points and halted interstate buses at the Singhu border. It also directed the closure of entry points at Singhu, Badarpur, Loni, and Chilla borders for heavy vehicles. Interstate buses terminating at ISBT Kashmere Gate will now terminate at Singhu.

SINKING FEELING

- Major affected areas include Civil Lines, Red Fort, Kashmere Gate, ITO, Delhi Secretariat, Ring Road, Wazirabad, Shastri Park, Akshardham, Yamuna Bank, Mayur Vihar Phase-I, Alipur, Jaitpur, Garhi Mandu, Okhla
- Floodwater barely 350 metres away Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence and the Delhi Assembly
- Red Fort closed from second half of Thursday to Friday
- Traffic disruption on almost all major roads, including parts of Ring Road
- Yamuna Bank Metro station on Blue Line shut. Trains ase moving at a slow pace on bridges
- All schools and colleges to remain shut till Sunday
- Govt employees, except those in emergency services, asked to work from home; private offices asked to switch to WFH
- Water supply in some parts of the city to be affected as three treatment plants — Wazirabad, Chandrawal and Okhla — shut
- Entry of heavy goods vehicles banned from Singhu, Badarpur, Chilla and Loni borders. Interstate buses from Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, J&K and Chandigarh to stop at Singhu border
- Main gate of government-run Sushruta Trauma Centre inundated, prompting authorities to transfer 40 patients, including three on ventilators, to LNJP hospital
- Nigambodh Ghat and Geeta Colony crematorium closed. Residents asked to go to Panchkuian Road, Sat Nagar, Punjabi Bagh, Green Park, Dakshinpuri crematoriums
- 16 NDRF teams deployed for relief, rescue operations

(From top) The flooded Red Fort; NDRF personnel rescuing Usmanpur residents

TRAINS CANCELLED

More than 300 mail and express trains and 406 passenger trains cancelled between July 7 and 15

ALERT

IMD predicts heavy rain in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh over next few days

A cloud mass is approaching from west (from Haryana). Possibility of light to moderate rainfall and gusty winds with speed of 40-60 km/hr over Delhi

WATER LEVEL IN **YAMUNA 208.66 METRES** AT 7PM
| 3 METRES ABOVE THE DANGER MARK

Bill soon to ensure speedy disposal of govt court cases

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

IN order to ensure successful and speedy disposal of government-related court cases, the state government is planning to bring in a strong law.

The state cabinet on Thursday decided to pass the Karnataka State Dispute Management Bill, 2023, during the current session of the legislature.

According to official sources, the state government lost over 1.85 lakh cases in various courts in the past three years. These include cases in district courts, KAT, high court and the Supreme Court. The proposed Bill is expected to help monitor cases, government advocates and other issues related to government cases. This is to ensure discipline when it comes to government cases.

Sources said the government lost many cases due to the absence of advocates or their negligence or siding with opposition parties. Lack of cooperation from officials of the department concerned is also one of the reasons.

The Bill is expected to streamline the system and make officials responsible. Action can be taken against errant officials. The cabinet also decided to release 67 convicts on August 15, form a sub-committee to study the order issued to give special status under 371(J) for Kalyan Karnataka, amend the Bayaluseeme Development Board Act and the Malnad Development Board Act and to form a sub-committee to study MSP for farm produce.

The cabinet also approved to bring amendments to the Karnataka Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prohibition of Transfer of Certain Lands).

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah speaks in the Assembly in Bengaluru on Thursday

PRIYANKA TO LAUNCH GRUHA LAKSHMI

The cabinet decided to launch the Gruha Lakshmi scheme to provide Rs 2,000 as financial assistance to women heads of households next week. The state government will invite Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi to launch the scheme between July 16 and 18. In his budget presented on July 7, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah termed it as India's biggest social security scheme with an allocation of ₹30,000 crore

Def panel clears plan to buy 26 Rafale-Ms, subs

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

ON the eve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) on Thursday approved proposals to purchase 26 maritime combat jets from Rafale and three additional Scorpene submarines.

While the size of the two deals is estimated at around ₹ 80,000 crore, the defence ministry said the price and other terms of purchase will be negotiated with the French government after taking into account all relevant aspects, including comparative procurement price of similar aircraft by other countries.

India and France are expected to announce the two procurement deals after wide-ranging talks between Modi and Macron on Friday. DAC, the highest decision-making body in the defence ministry that clears capital acquisitions for the three services, is headed by Union defence minister Rajnath Singh. The big-ticket procurement is expected to take the Navy's capabilities to the next level.

The 26 Rafale-Marine combat jets will include 22 single-seater and four double-seater trainer versions. The purchase of Rafale-M jets is aimed at strengthening India's maritime air combat capability, while the Scorpene subs will boost the Navy's underwater combat capability. The submarines will be constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited in cooperation with the Naval Group of France.

This newspaper was the first to report in March that the Indian Navy prefers the French fighter aircraft Marine over US F-18 Super Hornet.

Modi holds talks with French PM, meets diaspora

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being received by French PM Elisabeth Borne upon his arrival in Paris, France | PTI

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday began his two-day visit to France with back-to-back meetings with his French counterpart Elisabeth Borne, Senate President Gerard Larcher besides members of the Indian diaspora.

"PM @narendramodi held fruitful talks with PM @elisabeth_borne in Paris. The leaders reviewed various facets of India-France partnership as well as discussed measures to further strengthen the ties between both the countries," the PMO said.

During his meeting with Larcher, the two deliberated on a range of issues of mutual interest and agreed to work together to deepen India-France ties. Earlier in the day, Modi was received by Prime Minister Borne at the airport in a special gesture. A ceremonial welcome and Guard of honour were accorded to PM Modi upon his arrival. "I am looking forward to boosting India-France cooperation during this visit," Modi said.

Jain monk lent several lakhs to main accused: Police

SUNIL PATIL @ Belagavi

THE prime accused in the Jain monk's murder case, Narayan Basappa Mali (33), had borrowed several lakhs of rupees from the victim, police said.

A police team headed by DySP Basavaraj Yaligar on Thursday took the accused to the spot where the monk's diary was burnt. The team collected the remains of the diary, two cell phones of the monk, two cell phones of the accused, and sent them all to forensic labs.

Investigations revealed that Narayan became close to Kamkumar Nandi Maharaj, the victim, a couple of years ago after supplying sand to the monk's ashram for construction. In a short span of time, Narayan bought two tipper trucks and became a major sand supplier. The second accused, Hasansab Makbul Dalayat (33), used to work as Narayan's driver.

When the monk forced Narayan to return the money, the accused started avoiding him. Angered by the monk's repeated calls, Narayan with the help of Hasan allegedly attempted to kill him by giving electric shocks. When they failed in their attempt, they allegedly strangled the monk to death with a towel.

The accused Narayan Mali and Hasansab Makbul Dalayat

After committing the crime, Narayan burnt the diary to destroy evidence regarding his transactions. The accused also burnt the blood-stained clothes at the spot where they killed the monk. Then, they put the body into a gunny bag and took it to a field at Katakbhavi to dump it in an abandoned borewell. When they could not put the whole body into the borewell, they chopped it into pieces.

CRICKET

ICC ANNOUNCES EQUAL PRIZE-MONEY

In a welcome move, the ICC announced equal prize-money for men's and women's competitions. "Teams will now receive equal prize money for finishing in similar positions at comparable events," said an ICC press release | P13

WITH THIS ISSUE
CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE 38 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Hoteliers to hike prices of food items by 15-25%

PURAN CHOUDHARY
@ Bengaluru

GET ready to pay more for what you eat in hotels and bars and restaurants. For, the prices of food items are expected to go up by 15-25% soon.

This is because of the steep increase in prices of pulses, vegetables, spices and other commodities, which has affected their profit margins. Moreover, the state government is also planning to increase the milk price by Rs 5.

The hoteliers are also thinking of ways to increase the prices of food items without overburdening the customers. Not just the rising prices of raw material, but also the hike in electricity and water tariffs is forcing hoteliers to recalibrate their rate cards. In fact, some eateries in the city and elsewhere have already increased the prices of their food items by 5-10%.

PC Rao, president, Bruhat Bangalore Hotels' Association(BBHA), which has 24,500 eateries under its ambit, said, "Some hotels in the city have already revised the prices of food items because of the rising input costs impacting their business."

CONTINUED ON: P5

EXPRESS READ

Internet firm owner held in double-murder case

Bengaluru: Arun Kumar, the owner of internet service provider Gnet Broadband, was arrested in the murder case of Aironics Media Private Limited Managing Director Phanindra Subramanyam and Chief Executive Officer Vinu Kumar. Arun Kumar is the fourth accused in the case. P3

Pak PM: Will give charge to caretaker govt in Aug

Islamabad: Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said his government will hand over the reins to an interim setup in August to steer it through the general elections. This comes a day after Sharif said that Parliament would complete its term on August 14 to the pave way for the elections.